

HOME READING.

Outwitted.

"Will you be so good as to cut off my hair?" "What signorina?" cried the horrified barber, "out of your beautiful hair? No, you don't mean it; I couldn't have the heart!"

"Are you a barber, Don Ermanno?" asked Lucia with the gravity and firmness peculiar to her.

"Yes, it is on the sign-board, and I cut anybody's hair when I am asked, but—do you want to sell your beautiful plait?" he asked, with quite a sad expression in his kind eyes.

"No, I don't want to sell it, but I want it cut off, and I have come to ask you to do it for me," answered Lucia firmly and decidedly.

"Must I really?" said Don Ermanno, feeling a little cast down by the girl's energetic tone and manner.

"Yes—you must—if you will," was her rather odd answer, and therewith she hurried into the shop.

"If you knew how it grieved me!" began the barber again. "Is it a vow, signorina?"

"Something of the sort, but it is more than that to me," was the short answer.

"Then you have quite made up your mind?" he ventured to ask once more.

"Will you do it or will you not, Don Ermanno?" asked Lucia as if she were much offended and would leave the shop.

"Well—if it really must be done—please to sit down, signorina," said the barber.

Moving reluctantly to the cupboard in which he kept his implements.

Just at this moment two men came into the shop, and spied with a sly glance at his customer. "You're engaged, Don Ermanno?"

"At your service in a moment, gentle man," he answered; then bending over Lucia and taking her great plait, which was almost as thick as her arm, in his hand, he said in a low tone: "You will have just a little bit left?"

"No, cut it off close," answered Lucia in a whisper.

Don Ermanno gently put her head in the right position, and Lucia looking calmly and cheerfully into the little glass before her, could see with what a dismal countenance the light-haired giant went about his task, which was no such easy one, and took some minutes to accomplish. It was done at last, however, and the barber held the severed plait in his hands, his face wearing a very troubled expression.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," said Lucia, rising and bowing to the two men: "good-morning, Don Ermanno!" and before he had recovered from his astonishment, Lucia was out of the shop and trotting away on her mule, leaving him to look after her and shake his head in perplexity, while he still held the beautifully plaited tail-of-hair in his hands.

"A very pretty coquettish, signor!" said his visitors, who had not heard all that had passed.

"A lovely girl," answered Don Ermanno, "but strange, very strange, I can't make her out."

"Have you bought the plait?" they asked.

"What then?" they asked with curiosity.

"I don't know," was the short answer, as the barber made hurried preparations for shoving his customers.

He was anything but nervous in a general way; but to-day his hand trembled so much that he would certainly have performed his duties very clumsily if he had not made a great effort to recover his self-command.

"What does it mean?" he inquired, when he found himself once more alone. "What am I to do with it? I wonder whether it is a vow; I know the women about here do make strange vows sometimes; but she is so clever and sensible and not at all superstitious."

Don Ermanno thought over the affair for some time, but as he could not arrive at any conclusion, he locked the plait of hair up in his cigar-box and spent the next few hours in a rather uncomforatable state of mind, fearing that he was involved against his will in a matter which he did not understand.

CHAPTER IV.

Lucia reached Palenella again about midday, and rode into the village holding in her hand the kerchief she usually wore on her head circumstance which of itself would have been enough to attract attention since uncovered heads were rarely seen in the village.

But, as the absence of the kerchief revealed the fact that her heavy plait had disappeared, leaving only a short, stubby stump to show where once it had been, it was not many minutes before the whole village was excited.

"Lucia's hair has been cut off!"

The news spread like wildfire even before Lucia reached her own door, and was speedily confirmed, for confirmation were needed, by the fearful outburst of weeping and wailing with which Mother Cepriano received her daughter.

The old woman wrung her hands, tore her hair, uttered maledictions, screamed and howled so wildly that she was heard even in the furthestmost houses, and the whole population speedily collected round the house.

Lucia did not yet dismount, and there she sat on the mule, looking positively radiant with happiness.

That night the village was a long time in settling down to its usual state of quietness; for the men felt they had achieved a grand victory and could do no less than celebrate it, little guessing, of course, that they had been outwitted by a girl, and that so far from being the victors, they had actually been defeated, and had their own weapons turned against them.

Meanwhile, in spite of her happiness, Lucia was feeling a little uneasy as to the way in which Don Ermanno might view her conduct, and very early in the morning she was in the shop again. So early was she indeed, that he did not hear her enter, as he was busy with his coffee in the kitchen.

"Don Ermanno," began Lucia in a humble tremulous tone, "can you forgive me?"

The barber turned round like a flash of lightning: "Lucia! Lucia!" he exclaimed joyously; "but my dear girl, do for mercy's sake tell me what it all means. Is it true?"

"Am I really to marry you?"

"Do you, mind very much, signor? I thought—I fancied—" said poor Lucia, trembling and panting for breath.

"Mind! Ah, signorina, it is not that; I am only too happy to think I am to have such a dear, good, beautiful wife," said Lucia consolingly, and his manner was so hearty as to leave no room for doubt as to his sincerity. "My dearest girl, don't cry; this happiness has come upon me like a—like a thunder-bolt. You're the very wife I should have chosen above all others; but I don't understand what has happened, or how it all came about. Why, I have tea-

ter, but what is his name?"

"Don Ermanno!"

"What, he's a foreigner! the light-haired man! the sportsman!" cried several voices,

"It's all the same," screamed others. "It's twenty knives! How is it, dear signorina? How is it, dear signorina? It would make no difference. And why did you make me cut off your plait?"

Don Ermanno spoke so kindly and pleasantly, yet he shall die by our hands, and now looking up at him with a beaming face she said: "I will tell you all about it.

Don Ermanno. You see I was obliged to do as I did, or you could not have married me."

"At another time, when he was almost

foaming with passion, he shouted: "My

inspired act prevented an outbreak of war,

and when you have murdered me you will find it out."

Then Lucia went on tell her lover all the people here as a coincidence worth noticing,

as also striking that but for President Arthur, in which he asserted that his party would repudiate him and nominate

Blaine and then be swept out of existence.

At another time, when he was almost

more to me than the hundreds of thousands

that the railroad interest in New York gave

for the same purpose. I sing on I give it,

"I give thee all I kin no more.

The poor the often be."

We hav did our sheer—now let the Pres-

dent do his. He should consider that we

can't wait forever. He should remember

that we have bin outside the pale uv offish-

life for 24 years, gnashin our teeth at them

wuz inside. He should remember that meny uv us hev wat in till we hev

mos gross now on our bax, and that we hev

bin hungry all these years. He should

remember that the Civil Servis Reformer hez

stumick just the same ez any body else, and

that it costs the bars ez much to keep at Civil

Servis Reformer lobocated ez it does any

one else. He should remember that Lub-

bock by the way, been a bigger didn't vot

for anybody, but he wood hev votid for

Blane if he hed been permitted to vot at

all. He should remember that there are

letters a goin every day thro the mails uv

the Corinners, containin money, and that I

want that money fur Bascon and my other

sustenance. He should remember that the

lawn is wiggin us away to our eternal home,

and we can't wait forever. Ed he doily

daddies with the postfloss till I am dead and

an angel, wat good will it do me? I want

my reward now—now, while I hev a stumick

to feed and the fires uv a pernicious nose

to keep a blazin."

In this voice the cries the faithful

from the rock-bound coast uv Maine to the

savannas uv Texas. A howl fur two-thirds

uv the Dimocry uv the kentry. I am sayin

what the President must hev, for my appeal

is the appeal uv a starvin man.

We don't keeb about the Cabinet. Them

which will be appinted to the Cabinet don't

need their monthly pay anyhow. They hev

credit at the bars they patronize. They hev

clean shirts and most uv em probably

two or three. They are not the ones which

are hungrin and thirstin. It is us which are

after the Post offices and Collecterships, and

such places which must be fast attend to.

It is no time to settle questions uv policy.

To day is our accepted time, and the Post

offices is our policy.

If the President is wise he will heed this

cry. This is his fust bizniz. We don't

keeb for Policies or anything else. Give us

the offices fast and we'll swallow watever

Policy he presents to us. Deekin Polgram,

Issaker Gavitt and Bascon endorse every

word of this.

PETROLEUM V. NASH, (Ravenus.)

I borrowed \$7 of an intocxical just the number of parts to form the fram

Louisville drammier whch had come to the of one man, part poring myself, to part

and that the last Republican President was, and didn't know a quick mettalic chick, and when completed

Corners for the first time, and didn't know the figure sprang up, seized a small mallet,

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